

U.S. Department of State

Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO): *FY 2018 English Access Microscholarship Program*

Announcement Type: *New Cooperative Agreement*

Funding Opportunity Number: *ECA-ECAALW-18-003*

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Number: *19.421*

Key Date/Application Deadline: *March 12, 2018*

Program Description/Executive Summary: The Office of English Language Programs of the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA/A/L) announces an open competition to administer the English Access Microscholarship Program (Access), which provides a foundation of English language skills to bright, economically disadvantaged students in their home countries. Access programs introduce students, primarily aged 13 to 20, to U.S. culture and democratic values, improve the students' potential to fully contribute to the socio-economic development of their countries, and increase their ability to compete for and participate in U.S. exchange and study programs. The program will also support programming for alumni, teachers, directors, administrators and ministry officials that can be conducted in-country, in a region, or in the United States. ECA/A/L will select the in-country educational service providers that will conduct the classes. ECA/A/L will also select the participants for the program, based on input from Public Affairs Sections (PAS) at U.S. embassies. Because of the program's multiregional scope, the method of instruction, curriculum, textbooks, tests, hours of instruction, cost per participant, etc., will vary considerably from country to country and sometimes within a single country.

Under the close supervision of ECA/A/L, the recipient organization will disburse funds to in-country educational service providers around the world and will conduct at least two workshops in the United States for selected teachers, directors, administrators, and ministry officials. This open competition also includes programming for other relevant audiences and age ranges designated by ECA/A/L, training of teachers and in-country educational service providers, the development of an information sharing platform to disseminate resources and best practices; the creation of an online system to accept proposals, monitoring and evaluation reports, as well as program planning guides and the maintenance of a financial management system.

Pending the availability of FY 2018 funds, ECA/A/L anticipates funding scholarships for approximately 15,000 participants worldwide to receive in-country English language programming under this cooperative agreement. U.S. public and private non-profit organizations, who meet the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3), may submit proposals to administer and manage the FY 2018 English Access Microscholarship Program.

It is ECA/A/L's intent to award one cooperative agreement in the amount of up to \$26,000,000, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds, to an applicant that has the ability to administer the program and provide the necessary infrastructure and

demonstrated experience conducting this type of academic exchange program. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets and participant numbers in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Please see section B. Federal Award Information, below for additional details.

Applicants may submit only one proposal under this competition. If multiple proposals are received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared ineligible and receive no further consideration in the review process.

A. Program Description:

Overall grant making authority for this program is contained in the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961, Public Law 87-256, as amended, also known as the Fulbright-Hays Act. The purpose of the Act is "to enable the Government of the United States to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries...; to strengthen the ties which unite us with other nations by demonstrating the educational and cultural interests, developments, and achievements of the people of the United States and other nations...and thus to assist in the development of friendly, sympathetic and peaceful relations between the United States and the other countries of the world." The funding authority for the program above is provided through legislation.

Purpose: The Access Program provides a foundation of English language skills to bright, economically disadvantaged students, primarily aged 13 to 20, worldwide through extracurricular classes in their home countries. Access programs introduce students to U.S. culture and democratic values, improve the students' potential to participate successfully in the socio-economic development of their countries, and increase their ability to compete for and participate in future U.S. exchange and study programs. The program will also support programming for alumni, teachers, directors, administrators and ministry officials that can be conducted in-country, in a region or in the U.S. Because of the program's multiregional scope, the method of instruction, curriculum, textbooks, tests, hours of instruction, cost per participant, etc., may vary considerably from country to country and sometimes within a single country.

Background: The Access Program was launched in 2004 as a pilot program in countries of the Middle East and North Africa. ECA/A/L provides overall management of the program. The program has expanded to become a foundational element in the Bureau's continuum of exchanges to reach younger and more diverse audiences worldwide. Since its inception, over 150,000 students in more than 80 countries in all regions of the world have participated in the Access Program.

Participants: Participants will be identified and/or selected by the U.S. embassies and consulates in participating countries, based on allocations determined by ECA/A/L and with final selection made by ECA/A/L. Schools or other educational service providers that conduct the classes and training are also recommended by U.S. embassies and

consulates with final approval of ECA/A/L. (Note: Throughout this NOFO, these schools, NGOs and other partners will be referred to as "in-country educational service providers.") ECA/A/L will inform the recipient of the participating countries and the funding allocation to each country.

Cooperative Agreement: In a cooperative agreement, ECA/A/L is substantially involved in the Access Program, above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA/A/L provides overall direction and program and policy design with substantial involvement at all levels of the program. U.S. embassies are responsible for working with selected in-country educational service providers on the in-country aspects of the program.

The responsibilities of the recipient organization include but are not limited to the following:

a) Program Management:

- i) Disburse funds to in-country educational service providers worldwide. ECA/A/L will provide written instructions to the recipient organization identifying the in-country educational service providers as well as the amount of funds to be disbursed to each provider. The recipient organization will disburse funds quarterly to each partner organization (some U.S. embassies work with more than one partner organization). In limited cases, ECA/A/L may authorize a different disbursement schedule. The recipient organization will work with ECA/A/L, U.S. embassies, and in-country educational service providers to determine the most efficient means of disbursement.
- ii) Review all programmatic and financial proposals and reporting from the in-country educational service providers to ensure that it corresponds with the proposal originally submitted to and approved by ECA/A/L. Upon receipt of confirmation from the relevant U.S. embassy of appropriate monitoring and evaluation, the recipient organization will disburse funding. Reports requesting disbursements that do not correspond to the approved proposal or that do not have confirmation from the U.S. embassy must be authorized by ECA/A/L.
- iii) Collect, review, provide feedback, and seek revisions to official program documentation (e.g. proposals, agreements, reports, evaluation documents, etc.) from the in-country educational service providers on a schedule agreed to by the U.S. embassies and the providers. ECA/A/L may direct the recipient organization to request feedback and revisions that include discrepancies in financial reporting, clarifying allowable program activities and allowances, inconsistencies in program activities, etc.
- iv) Draft and finalize official documentation (e.g. agreements between the recipient organization and the provider that outline as the scope of work, budget, reporting schedule, etc.) before disbursing funds.
- v) Create an online system to track the entire lifecycle of the programs

worldwide (e.g. proposals, official documents, reports, monitoring & evaluation documents, etc.) and the disbursements in addition to sending reminders to providers when official program documentation is due and overdue. ECA/A/L, U.S. embassies, and other providers as determined by ECA/A/L should have access to this online system for tracking the program's lifecycle.

- vi) In response to Executive Order 13224, which requires U.S. organizations to verify that they are not providing and will not knowingly provide material support or resources to any individual or entity that appears on the Master List of Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons maintained by the U.S. Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) or has been designated by the United States Sanctions Committee (UNSC) established under UNSC Resolution 1267 for individuals or entities that are linked to terrorists or terrorist organizations, the recipient organization must collect and vet the in-country educational service providers' information and the names of its senior staff against these, and similar lists.
- vii) Work closely with ECA/A/L to identify program challenges and develop solutions, track trending issues, help establish local program monitoring and evaluation methods, and perform other programmatic analyses as requested by ECA/A/L.
- viii) Personnel: The recipient organization will provide sufficient personnel needed to manage the program. The recipient organization will seek approval from ECA/A/L for proposed changes to key personnel.
- ix) Educational Materials: At ECA/A/L's request and with its guidance, the recipient organization will seek opportunities to collaborate with other ECA programs and utilize materials from those programs. This collaboration may also include printing and shipping ECA/A/L-produced educational materials.
- x) Digital learning resources: The recipient organization may be directed by ECA/A/L to develop digital learning resources for English language learning; coordinate and support the deployment of these resources overseas, including the purchase and shipment of equipment, as necessary and directed by ECA/A/L; and manage professional development activities to allow educators to use these products most effectively abroad.
- xi) Shipment of books and materials: The recipient organization may purchase and ship books and materials to the providers in the field as required. ECA/A/L will authorize the purchases and shipments as necessary based on program requirements.
- xii) Publications: The recipient organization will draft and clear all public advertisements, newsletters, and websites with ECA/A/L before development and dissemination to ensure proper identification with the

U.S. Department of State.

- xiii) Educational Consultants: The recipient organization may contract with educational consultants, who will work closely with the recipient organization and ECA/A/L on resource development and programmatic activities.
- xiv) Additional Programming: The recipient organization will support in-country, regional, or U.S. programming for alumni, teachers, directors, administrators, and ministry officials as requested by ECA/A/L. The recipient organization will support programming for other relevant audiences, different program lengths, and age ranges as designated by ECA/A/L.
- xv) Data Management: The recipient organization will create an online system to accept proposal applications, monitoring and evaluation reports, as well as program planning guides, and will maintain a financial management system related to this cooperative agreement.
- xvi) Community of Practice: The recipient organization will create and maintain at least one technical platform for programmatic and educational resources, including a community of practice for Access teachers and administrators to share items such as best practices, educational materials and lesson plans.
- xvii) Training: The recipient organization will train ECA/A/L and staff in the field how to use the online systems to properly manage the program.
- xviii) Communication Strategy: The recipient organization should develop a public communication strategy, including the management of the program's global and local online presence.

b) U.S. Exchange Component (workshops):

The recipient organization may conduct workshops itself or may issue a sub-award(s) to an organization(s) through an open competition or a specific organization as directed by ECA/A/L. Sub-recipients may include U.S. non-profit organizations and accredited U.S. colleges and universities. The recipient organization will plan, conduct, and fund at least two workshops in the United States for approximately 50 selected ministry officials, administrators, directors, teachers and alumni as directed by ECA/A/L.

- i) Workshops in the United States will be conducted for teachers, directors, administrators, ministry officials, and alumni, chosen by ECA/A/L from nominations by U.S. embassies. The recipient organization will work with ECA/A/L to define the duration of the workshops and the number of participants. The workshops should focus on providing participants with the most current teaching methods, exposure to relevant educational technology, education policy, educational leadership, service learning, and education administration. Workshop participants should also be introduced to U.S. society and institutions, that could include an academic

component on U.S. history, society, and culture, as well as attendance at conferences related to the English as a Second Language (ESL)/English as a Foreign Language (EFL) field. At least one of the workshops should be associated with the yearly Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) Association International Convention.

- ii) The recipient organization will be responsible for all logistical arrangements during participants' time in the United States, which includes but is not limited to:
 - a) Coordinate with ECA/A/L to discuss expectations, including themes, timing, participant numbers, and correspondence with the field and workshop participants. Once the workshop ends, coordinate a debrief meeting with ECA/A/L to capture best practices and recommend areas for improvement.
 - b) Organize and facilitate the workshop component of the program. If the recipient will seek a sub-recipient(s) to administer the U.S. exchange component, the recipient organization should use a competitive process to select the sub-recipient(s). In collaboration with ECA/A/L, the recipient organization will select the most appropriate sub-recipient and ensure that all proposed programming is relevant for participants.
 - c) Prepare DS-2019 forms, budgeting for all necessary visa application and processing fees and communicating clearly the guidelines and information regarding visa regulations including the participants' return to their home countries after the completion of the program. The program must comply with J-Visa regulations. Please refer to the Solicitation Package for further information.
 - d) Prepare and distribute necessary pre-departure orientation materials for use by posts to deliver pre-departure orientations.
 - e) Make round-trip international travel arrangements to and from participants' home cities in compliance with the Fly America Act.
 - f) Arrange U.S. domestic and local travel for participants.
 - g) Prepare and facilitate an orientation upon participants' arrival in the United States that includes a basic introduction to American life, customs, and norms, and how these customs and norms might differ from those of the participants' home countries.
 - h) Enroll participants in the State Department's Accident and Sickness Program for Exchanges (ASPE) or other health benefit plan as required by ECA; budget for insurance costs; and provide participants with medical coverage and enrollment information.
 - i) Comply with all applicable tax treaties and federal, state, and local laws on tax withholding and reporting for participants.
 - j) Maintain contact lists for participants and alumni.

- k) Provide qualitative and quantitative results about the exchanges, including recording and reporting on participation in academic and community activities.
- l) Administer all financial and logistical aspects of the program and comply with reporting requirements.
- m) Monitor and evaluate the program through pre- and post-surveys for participants, in addition to questionnaires and evaluations collected during the program.

Activities and Responsibilities for ECA/A/L, U.S. embassies, and in-country educational service providers

In this cooperative agreement, ECA/A/L is substantially involved in the program activities, above and beyond routine monitoring. ECA/A/L activities and responsibilities for the Access Program include but are not limited to:

- 1) Allocate program funds by region and country.
- 2) Approve, based on input from U.S. embassies, Regional English Language Officers, and the U.S. Department of State's regional bureaus, the in-country educational service providers, U.S. cultural enhancement activities, service learning activities, and leadership development for the Access students. Also approve programming for alumni or professional development opportunities for teachers, directors, administrators and ministry officials.
- 3) Select, based on input from U.S. embassies and the in-country educational service providers, the students who receive the scholarships.
- 4) Approve official program proposals submitted by in-country educational service providers for all programming under this cooperative agreement.
- 5) Determine, based on input from U.S. embassies, the amount and timing of financial disbursements by the recipient organization to the in-country educational service providers.
- 6) Serve, except for routine disbursements and other transactions approved in advance by ECA/A/L, as the recipient's intermediary with the in-country educational service providers involved in the program. Similarly, ECA/A/L will serve as the primary point of contact and intermediary with U.S. embassies involved in the program.
- 7) Determine the number of exchanges, direct the development of content for U.S.-based exchanges, and determine the length and the number of participants in those exchanges.
- 8) Select, based on input from U.S. embassies and the in-country educational service providers, the directors, teachers, administrators, ministry officials, and alumni who participate in U.S.-based exchanges;
- 9) Direct all phases of planning and development and approve design of the in-country workshops, U.S.-based exchanges, and alumni activities.
- 10) Approve all major personnel changes in the recipient organization that are directly involved with this cooperative agreement.

In this cooperative agreement, U.S. embassies are also substantially involved in the program activities, above and beyond routine monitoring. U.S. embassies' activities and responsibilities for the Access Program include but are not limited to:

- 1) In collaboration with the relevant Regional English Language Officer, select the in-country educational service provider(s) (schools(s), NGO(s), etc.) that will provide a) English language instruction, U.S. cultural enhancement activities, service learning, and leadership development to the Access scholarship students; b) programming for alumni; and/or c) professional development opportunities for teachers, directors, administrators, and ministry officials.
- 2) Serve as the primary point of contact between the recipient organization and the in-country educational service providers.
- 3) Determine the level of funding for each in-country educational service provider within the overall country allocations.
- 4) Review and approve proposals, official documentation, and reports for all programming under this cooperative agreement.
- 5) Collaborate with in-country educational service providers on the participant selection process and recommend to ECA/A/L the selection of participants.
- 6) Collaborate with in-country educational service providers in developing appropriate materials, curricula, U.S. cultural enhancement activities, and community service projects.
- 7) Participate in enhancement activities for Access students, when possible.
- 8) Propose participants for the workshops to ECA/A/L.
- 9) Monitor the performance of the in-country educational service providers, including conducting a site visit to each in-country educational service provider at least once a year.
- 10) Conduct regular review of the in-country educational service providers' programs and financial management and assess the program's impact.
- 11) Monitor and evaluate the impact of the program to meet mission strategic goals.
- 12) Provide certificates signed by the U.S. Ambassador or other U.S. embassy officer to the students at the beginning and end of the Access Program.
- 13) Collect, review, approve, and submit programmatic and financial reports as well as alumni data from the in-country educational service providers.

In this cooperative agreement, in-country educational service providers are also substantially involved in the program activities. They may or may not choose to work with additional in-country educational service providers to meet programmatic and administrative needs. In-country educational service providers' activities and responsibilities for the Access Program include but are not limited to:

- 1) Plan and prepare programming closely with the U.S. embassy, Regional English Language Officer, and ECA/A/L.
- 2) Draft proposals that meet program requirements and submit for approval to the U.S. embassy, Regional English Language Officer, and ECA/A/L.
- 3) Advertise and recruit participants for student scholarships and alumni programming and for professional development opportunities for teachers, directors, administrators, and ministry officials.

- 4) Collaborate with the U.S. embassy during the participant selection process.
- 5) Implement the program according to verbal and written guidelines from the U.S. embassy, approved proposals, and signed official documents.
- 6) Nominate participants for workshops and other professional development opportunities in coordination with the U.S. embassy and ECA/A/L.
- 7) Regularly monitor and evaluate the program to ensure that it is implemented in accordance with the relevant official documents, encourages and highlights and best practices, and addresses challenges quickly.
- 8) Send invitations to the U.S. embassy about special events, providing opportunities for U.S. embassy personnel to visit and speak with Access participants, teachers, and other in-country educational service provider staff.
- 9) Coordinate with the U.S. embassy to distribute certificates signed by the U.S. Ambassador or other U.S. embassy officer to the students at the beginning and end of the Access Program.
- 10) Submit timely programmatic and financial reports as well as alumni data according to the schedule outlined in official documents and when requested by the U.S. embassy.
- 11) Keep the U.S. embassies and Regional English Language Officer informed about significant developments or changes in the program, e.g. teachers leaving, classes being temporarily canceled, etc.

B. Federal Award Information:

Type of Award: Cooperative Agreement. ECA's level of involvement in this program is listed under A. Program Description above.

Fiscal Year Funds: FY 2018, pending the availability of funds.

Approximate Total Funding: Up to \$26,000,000, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds.

Approximate Number of Awards: 1

Approximate Average Award: Up to \$26,000,000, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds.

Floor of Award Range: None

Ceiling of Award Range: Up to \$26,000,000, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds.

Anticipated Award Date: August 1, 2018, pending the availability of FY 2018 funds.

Anticipated Project Completion Date: June 30, 2023

Additional Information: The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds.

Pending successful implementation of this program and the availability of funds in subsequent fiscal years, it is ECA's intent to renew this cooperative agreement for two additional consecutive fiscal years, before openly competing it again.

C.) Eligibility Information:

C.1. Eligible applicants: Applications may be submitted by U.S. public and private non-profit organizations meeting the provisions described in Internal Revenue Code section 26 USC 501(c)(3).

C.2. Cost Sharing or Matching Funds: There is no minimum or maximum percentage required for this competition. However, the Bureau encourages applicants to provide maximum levels of cost sharing and funding in support of its programs.

When cost sharing is offered, it is understood and agreed that the applicant must provide the amount of cost sharing as stipulated in its proposal and later included in an approved agreement. Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. For accountability, you must maintain written records to support all costs which are claimed as your contribution, as well as costs to be paid by the Federal government. Such records are subject to audit. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with the Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards. In the event you do not provide the minimum amount of cost sharing as stipulated in the approved budget, ECA's contribution will be reduced in like proportion.

C.3. Other Eligibility Requirements:

a.) Bureau grant guidelines require that organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges be limited to \$130,000 in Bureau funding. ECA anticipates making one award, in an amount up to \$26,000,000, pending availability of funds, to support program and administrative costs required to implement this exchange program. Therefore, organizations with less than four years of experience in conducting international exchanges are ineligible to apply under this competition.

b.) **Technical Eligibility:** All proposals must comply with the following or they will result in your proposal being declared technically ineligible and given no further consideration in the review process:

Eligible applicants may not submit more than one proposal in this competition. If more than one proposal is received from the same applicant, all submissions will be declared technically ineligible and will receive no further consideration in the review process. **Please note:** Applicant organizations are defined by their legal name, and EIN number as stated on their completed SF-424 and additional supporting documentation outlined in the Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document.

D. Application and Submission Information:

Note: Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

D.1 Contact Information to Request an Application Package:

Please contact Melissa Fernandez, Office of English Language Programs, ECA/A/L, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone (202) 632-9276, accessprogram@state.gov to request a Solicitation Package.

The Solicitation Package contains the Proposal Submission Instruction (PSI) document which consists of required application forms, and standard guidelines for proposal preparation.

Please specify ECA/A/L Program Officer Melissa Fernandez and refer to the Funding Opportunity Number located at the top of this announcement on all other inquiries and correspondence.

D.2. To Download a Solicitation Package Via Internet: The entire Solicitation Package may be downloaded from the Bureau's website at <https://eca.state.gov/organizational-funding> or from the Grants.gov website at <https://www.grants.gov>.

Please read all information before downloading.

D.2a. Content and Form of Submission: Applicants must follow all instructions in the Solicitation Package. The application should be submitted per the instructions under D.3p. "Application Deadline and Method of Submission" section below.

D.3a. Unique Entity Identifier Number: You are required to have a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number to apply for a grant or cooperative agreement from the U.S. Government. This number is a nine-digit identification number, which uniquely identifies business entities. Obtaining a UEI number is easy and there is no charge. To obtain a UEI number, access <http://www.dnb.com> or call 1-866-705-5711. Please ensure that your UEI (Data Universal Numbering System or DUNS) number is included in the appropriate box of the SF – 424 which is part of the formal application package. For more detailed instructions for obtaining a UEI (DUNS) number, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-1-obtain-duns-number.html>

D.3b. Required Proposal Elements: All proposals must contain an executive summary, proposal narrative, and budget.

Please Refer to the Solicitation Package. It contains the mandatory Proposal Submission Instructions (PSI) document for additional formatting and technical requirements.

Proposal Contents

Applicants should submit a complete and thorough proposal describing the program in a convincing and comprehensive manner. Since there is no opportunity for applicants to meet with reviewing officials, the proposal should respond to the criteria set forth in the solicitation and other guidelines as clearly as possible.

Proposals should address succinctly, but completely, the elements described below and must follow all format requirements.

NOTE: Proposals submitted through Grants.gov may only be submitted in the following formats:

- Microsoft Word
- Microsoft Excel
- Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF)
- ASCII Text
- Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG images)

Proposals should include the following items under the section headings in the GrantSolutions Application Checklist. All documents should be appropriately and clearly titled.

Online Forms

- SF-424, "Application for Federal Assistance"
- SF-424A, "Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs"
- SF-424B, "Assurances – Non-Construction Programs"
- Include other attachments, if applicable, such as indirect agreements, form 990, SF-LLL, etc.

Program Narrative

Executive Summary (One page)

In one double-spaced page, provide the following information about the project:

1. Name of organization/participating institutions
2. Beginning and ending dates of the program
3. Proposed theme
4. Nature of activity
5. Funding level requested from the Bureau, total program cost, total cost-sharing from applicant and other sources
6. Scope and Goals
 - a. Number and description of participants
 - b. Wider audience benefiting from program (overall impact)
 - c. Geographic diversity of program, both U.S. and overseas
 - d. Fields covered

e. Anticipated results (short and long-term)

Narrative

In 20 double-spaced, single-sided pages, provide a detailed description of the project addressing the areas listed below.

1. Vision (statement of need, objectives, goals, benefits)
2. Participating Organizations
3. Program Activities (advertisement, recruitment, orientation, academic component, cultural program, participant monitoring)
4. Program Evaluation
5. Follow-on
6. Project Management
7. Work Plan/Time Frame

Additional Information to be Submitted

- Detailed Budget
- Calendar of activities/itinerary, if applicable
- Letters of endorsement
- Resumes and CVs (resumes of all new staff should be included in the submission; no resume should exceed two pages.)
- First Time Applicant Attachments, if applicable.

D.3c. Required Registration with the System for Award Management (SAM): All federal award applicants must be registered in the System for Award Management (SAM) database in order to submit a proposal in response to an open competition on Grants.gov.

All federal award recipients must maintain current registrations in the SAM database. Recipients must maintain accurate and up-to-date information in www.SAM.gov until all program and financial activity and reporting have been completed. Recipients must review and update the information at least annually after the initial registration and more frequently if required information changes or another award is granted. There is no cost associated with registering or updating SAM.gov accounts. Failure to register in SAM.gov will render applicants ineligible to receive funding.

For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

D.3d. Non-Profit Status: You must have nonprofit status with the IRS at the time of application. **Please note:** All applicants for ECA federal assistance awards must include in their application the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees, regardless of amount of compensation). In fulfilling this

requirement, applicants must submit information in one of the following ways:

- 1) Those who file Internal Revenue Service Form 990, "Return of Organization Exempt From Income Tax," must include a copy of relevant portions of this form.
- 2) Those who do not file IRS Form 990 must submit information above in the format of their choice.

D.3e. FFATA Report: In addition to final program reporting requirements, award recipients will also be required to submit a one-page document, derived from their program reports, listing and describing their grant activities. For award recipients, the names of directors and/or senior executives (current officers, trustees, and key employees), as well as the one-page description of grant activities, will be transmitted by the State Department to OMB, along with other information required by the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA), and will be made available to the public by the Office of Management and Budget on its USASpending.gov website as part of ECA's FFATA reporting requirements.

D.3f. Verifying Non-Profit Status: If your organization is a private nonprofit which has not received a grant or cooperative agreement from ECA in the past three years, or if your organization received nonprofit status from the IRS within the past four years, you must submit the necessary documentation to verify nonprofit status as directed in the PSI document. Failure to do so will cause your proposal to be declared technically ineligible.

D.3g. GrantSolutions: All ECA awards recipient organizations must be registered with GrantSolutions by accessing www.GrantSolutions.gov. To register as a first time user of GrantSolutions, please scroll to the bottom of the home page and click "Getting Started-Request a User Account" at <http://home.grantsolutions.gov/home/home/customer-support/getting-started/>. Organizations that have previously used GrantSolutions do not need to register again. If the organization is not able to access the system, please contact GrantSolutions.gov Help Desk for help in gaining access.

Support for Grantee Organizations is available from 8 AM – 6 PM Washington, DC time, Monday – Friday and can be reached at help@grantsolutions.gov or 1-866-577-0771.

Please take into consideration the following information when preparing your proposal narrative:

D.3h. ADHERENCE TO ALL REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE J VISA: The Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs places critically important emphases on the security and proper administration of the Exchange Visitor (J visa) Programs and adherence by award recipients and sponsors to all regulations governing the J visa. Therefore, proposals should demonstrate the applicant's capacity to meet all requirements governing the administration of the Exchange Visitor Programs as set forth in 22 CFR 62, including the oversight of Responsible Officers and Alternate Responsible Officers,

screening and selection of program participants, provision of pre-arrival information and orientation to participants, monitoring of participants, proper maintenance and security of forms, record-keeping, reporting and other requirements.

The award recipient will be responsible for issuing DS-2019 forms to participants in this program.

A copy of the complete regulations governing the administration of Exchange Visitor (J) programs is available at <http://j1visa.state.gov> or from:

Office of Designation, Private Sector Programs Division
U.S. Department of State
SA-4E (Bldg. 3)
2430 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20037

Please refer to Solicitation Package for further information.

D.3i. Diversity, Freedom and Democracy Guidelines: Pursuant to the Bureau's authorizing legislation, programs must maintain a non-political character and should be balanced and representative of the diversity of political, social and cultural life in the United States and abroad. 'Diversity' should be interpreted in the broadest sense and encompass differences including race, color, national origin, sex, age, religion, geographic location, socio-economic status, disability, sexual orientation or gender identity. Proposals should demonstrate how diversity will enhance the program's goals and objectives and the participants' exchange experience. Please refer to the review criteria under the 'Support of Diversity' section of this document as well as the DIVERSITY, FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY section in the "Proposal Submission Instructions" document for specific suggestions on incorporating diversity into the total proposal.

Public Law 104-319 provides that "in carrying out programs of educational and cultural exchange in countries whose people do not fully enjoy freedom and democracy," the Bureau "shall take appropriate steps to provide opportunities for participation in such programs to human rights and democracy leaders of such countries." Public Law 106 - 113 requires that the governments of the countries described above do not have inappropriate influence in the selection process. Proposals should reflect advancement of these goals in their program contents, to the full extent deemed feasible.

D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation: Proposals must include a plan to monitor and evaluate the project's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that your proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus a description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. The Bureau expects that the recipient

organization will track participants or partners and be able to respond to key evaluation questions, including satisfaction with the program, learning as a result of the program, changes in behavior as a result of the program, and effects of the program on institutions (institutions in which participants work or partner institutions). The evaluation plan should include indicators that measure gains in mutual understanding as well as substantive knowledge.

Successful monitoring and evaluation depend heavily on setting clear goals and outcomes at the outset of a program. Your evaluation plan should include a description of your project's objectives, your anticipated project outcomes, and how and when you intend to measure these outcomes (performance indicators). The more that outcomes are "smart" (specific, measurable, attainable, results-oriented, and placed in a reasonable time frame), the easier it will be to conduct the evaluation. You should also show how your project objectives link to the goals of the program described in this NOFO.

Your monitoring and evaluation plan should clearly distinguish between program outputs and outcomes. Outputs are products and services delivered, often stated as an amount. Output information is important to show the scope or size of project activities, but it cannot substitute for information about progress towards outcomes or the results achieved. Examples of outputs include the number of people trained or the number of seminars conducted. Outcomes, in contrast, represent specific results a project is intended to achieve and is usually measured as an extent of change. Findings on outputs and outcomes should both be reported, but the focus should be on outcomes.

We encourage you to assess the following four levels of outcomes, as they relate to the program goals set out in the NOFO (listed here in increasing order of importance):

1. **Participant satisfaction** with the program and exchange experience.
2. **Participant learning**, such as increased knowledge, aptitude, skills, and changed understanding and attitude. Learning includes both substantive (subject-specific) learning and mutual understanding.
3. **Participant behavior**, such as concrete actions to apply knowledge in work or community; greater participation and responsibility in civic organizations; interpretation and explanation of experiences and new knowledge gained; continued contacts between participants, community members, and others.
4. **Institutional changes**, such as increased collaboration and partnerships, policy reforms, new programming, and organizational improvements.

Please note: Consideration should be given to the appropriate timing of data collection for each level of outcome. For example, satisfaction is usually captured as a short-term outcome, whereas behavior and institutional changes are normally considered longer-term outcomes.

Overall, the quality of your monitoring and evaluation plan will be judged on how well it

1) specifies intended outcomes; 2) gives clear descriptions of how each outcome will be measured; 3) identifies when particular outcomes will be measured; and 4) provides a clear description of the data collection strategies for each outcome (i.e., surveys, interviews, or focus groups). (Please note that evaluation plans that deal only with the first level of outcomes [satisfaction] will be deemed less competitive under the present evaluation criteria.)

Recipient organizations will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

D.3k. Virtual Exchange Component: ECA welcomes innovative ideas on how organizations can leverage appropriate mobile and/or online technologies to maintain engagement among exchange participants, encourage project collaboration and widen participation in the overall project to a broader audience. ECA strongly encourages organizations submitting proposals in response to this solicitation to suggest one or more virtual exchange components to complement the in-person exchange. The virtual exchange component(s) could come before, during and/or after the physical exchange. The objective for the virtual exchange component(s), defined as technology-enabled, sustainable, people-to-people, cross-cultural exchanges, is to augment the impact of the in-person exchange described in this solicitation. ECA encourages organizations to propose virtual exchange ideas that take advantage of ECA's existing web and social networking platforms, including our International Exchange Alumni space. Virtual exchange components would be coordinated with and approved by the ECA program office and U.S. missions abroad on a project by project basis.

D.3l. Communications Guidance for ECA Grant Recipients: All ECA Grant Recipients must adhere to the requirements in [ECA's Communications Guidance](#) on the creation of program branding and attribution, websites, social media, and press.

D.3m. Please take the following information into consideration when preparing your budget:

D.3n. Applicants must submit SF-424A – “Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs” along with a comprehensive budget for the entire program. There must be a summary budget as well as breakdowns reflecting both administrative and program budgets. Applicants may provide separate sub-budgets for each program component, phase, location, or activity to provide clarification.

D.3o. Allowable costs for the program include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Program costs for the in-country educational services providers to administer the after school and intensive sessions of the scholarship program including, but not limited to, instruction, materials, venue rental, accommodations, transportation and meals.

- 2) Costs associated with a local institution's training and alumni activities including, but not limited to, instruction, materials, venue rental, accommodations, transportation and meals.
- 3) Costs associated with planning, conducting, and funding at least two workshops in the United States for approximately two weeks or more in duration for approximately 50 selected teachers, directors, administrators, and ministry officials. Costs should at minimum include: the participants' international and domestic transportation, U.S. per diem, space rental, workshop materials, participants' pre-departure costs such as visa costs, necessary travel to obtain visas, etc.
- 4) Administrative Costs:
 1. Staff salaries and benefits (each staff member and his/her position must be listed separately). Please also note the percentage of his/her total time spent on this program.
 2. Communication costs (e.g. fax, telephone, postage, communication equipment, etc.)
 3. Office supplies
 4. Printing and duplication costs
 5. OMB Guidance 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart F Single Audit fees
 6. Other direct costs; and
 7. Indirect costs.

Please refer to the Solicitation Package for complete budget guidelines and formatting instructions.

D.3p. Application Deadline and Method of Submission:

Application Deadline Date: Monday, March 12, 2018

Method of Submission: Applications may only be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (<https://www.grants.gov>). Complete solicitation packages are available at Grants.gov in the "Search Grants" portion of the system.

D.3q. Grants.gov Registration, Application Submission, and Receipt Procedures

Eligible organizations should follow the instructions available in the 'Get Started' portion of the site (<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>).

How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

Applicants should read instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

The registration process can take up to four weeks to complete. Therefore, registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact your ability to meet required application submission deadlines. Applicants should check with appropriate staff within their organizations immediately after reviewing this NOFO to confirm or

determine their registration status with Grants.gov. Organization applicants can find complete instructions here: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

How to Submit an Application to ECA via Grants.gov

For access to complete instruction on how to apply for Notice of Funding Opportunities on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/apply-for-grants.html>

Grants.gov Support and Submission Issues

Direct all questions regarding Grants.gov registration and submission issues to:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Contact Center Phone: 800 -518-4726

Business Hours: 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; closed on federal holidays

Email: support@grants.gov

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Applicants have until midnight (12:00 a.m.), Washington, DC time of the closing date to ensure that their entire application has been uploaded to the Grants.gov site. There are no exceptions to the above deadline. Applications uploaded to the site after midnight of the application deadline date will be automatically rejected by the Grants.gov system, and will be technically ineligible.

Therefore, we strongly recommend that you not wait until the application deadline to begin the submission process through Grants.gov.

Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. The applicant AOR will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. Applicant AORs will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When ECA successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgement of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role. Again, proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application.

Applicants using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role. The Grants.gov Support Center reports

that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

The Grants.gov website includes extensive information on all phases/aspects of the Grants.gov process, including an extensive section on frequently asked questions, located under the "Applicant FAQs" section of the website. ECA strongly recommends that all potential applicants review thoroughly the Grants.gov website, well in advance of submitting a proposal through the Grants.gov system. ECA will not notify you upon receipt of electronic applications.

PLEASE NOTE: ECA bears no responsibility for applicant timeliness of submission or data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes for proposals submitted via Grants.gov.

It is the responsibility of all applicants submitting proposals via the Grants.gov web portal to ensure that proposals have been received by Grants.gov in their entirety, and ECA bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

D.3r. Intergovernmental Review of Applications: Executive Order 12372 does not apply to this program.

E. APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

The Bureau will review all proposals for technical eligibility. Proposals will be deemed ineligible if they do not fully adhere to the guidelines stated herein and in the Solicitation Package. All eligible proposals will be reviewed by the program office, as well as the Public Diplomacy section overseas and State Department regional bureaus, where appropriate. Eligible proposals will be subject to compliance with Federal and Bureau regulations and guidelines and forwarded to Bureau grant panels for advisory review. Proposals may also be reviewed by the Office of the Legal Adviser or by other Department elements. All awards will be assessed for risk prior to their issuance. Final funding decisions are at the discretion of the Department of State's Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs. Final technical authority for assistance awards resides with the Bureau's Grants Officer.

E.1. REVIEW CRITERIA

Technically eligible applications will be competitively reviewed according to the criteria stated below. These criteria are not rank ordered and all carry equal weight in the proposal evaluation:

1. *Quality of the program idea and program planning:* The proposal should exhibit originality, substance, precision, and relevance to ECA's mission. Detailed agenda and relevant work plan should demonstrate substantive undertakings and logistical capacity. Agenda and plan should adhere to the program overview and guidelines described above.
2. *Ability to achieve program objectives and institutional capacity, including institution track record and ability:* Objectives should be reasonable, feasible, and flexible. The proposal should clearly demonstrate how the institution will meet the program's objectives and plan. Proposed personnel and institutional resources should be adequate and appropriate to achieve the program or project's goals. The proposal should demonstrate an institutional record of successful exchange programs, including responsible fiscal management and full compliance with all reporting requirements for past ECA awards (grants or cooperative agreements) as determined by ECA Grants Staff. The Bureau will consider the past performance of prior recipients and the demonstrated potential of new applicants.
3. *Support of Diversity:* The proposal should show substantive support of ECA's policy on diversity. The proposal should demonstrate how diversity will be achieved in the different aspects of program administration and of program design, content and implementation, including individual grantee/participant recruitment, selection and placement. It is important that the proposal has a clearly articulated diversity plan and not simply express general support for the concept of diversity.
4. *Project Evaluation:* Proposals should include a plan to evaluate the activity's success, both as the activities unfold and at the end of the program. The Bureau recommends that the proposal include a draft survey questionnaire or other technique plus description of a methodology to use to link outcomes to original project objectives. Award-receiving organizations/institutions will be expected to submit intermediate reports after each project component is concluded or quarterly, whichever is less frequent.
5. *Multiplier effect/impact and follow-on activities:* The proposed activities should strengthen long-term mutual understanding, including maximum sharing of information and establishment of long-term institutional and individual linkages. The proposals should provide a plan for continued follow-on activity (without Bureau support) which insures that Bureau supported programs are not isolated events.
6. *Cost-effectiveness and Cost-Sharing:* The overhead and administrative components of the proposal, including salaries and honoraria, should be kept as low as possible. All other items should be necessary and appropriate. The proposal should maximize cost-sharing through other private sector support as well as institutional direct funding contributions.

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F.1. Award Notices: Final awards cannot be made until funds have been appropriated by Congress, allocated and committed through internal Bureau procedures. Successful applicants will receive a Federal Assistance Award (FAA) from the Bureau's Grants Office. The FAA and the original proposal with subsequent modifications (if applicable) shall be the only binding authorizing document between the recipient and the U.S. Government. The FAA will be signed by an authorized Grants Officer, and transmitted to the recipient's responsible officer identified in the application.

Unsuccessful applicants will receive notification of the results of the application review from the ECA program office coordinating this competition.

All awards made under this competition must be executed according to all relevant U.S. laws and policies regarding assistance to the Palestinian Authority, and to the West Bank and Gaza. Organizations must consult with relevant Public Affairs Offices before entering into any formal arrangements or agreements with Palestinian organizations or institutions.

Note: To assure that planning for the inclusion of the Palestinian Authority complies with requirements, please contact Rachel Rubin, at telephone 202-647-4558 or rubinre@state.gov for additional information.

F.2 Administrative and National Policy Requirements: Terms and Conditions for the Administration of ECA agreements include the following: Office of Management and Budget's Guidance 2 CFR Parts 200 and 600, entitled the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Effective December 26, 2014, replacing the previous circulars).

For a copy of the OMB Guidance cited, please contact the U.S. Government Publishing Office or download from the www.ecfr.gov website.

Please reference the following websites for additional information:

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/omb>
<https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm>

F.3. Reporting Requirements: You must provide ECA with an electronic copy of the following required reports:

Mandatory:

- 1.) Additional performance reports shall not be required more frequently than quarterly or, less frequently than annually. Annual reports shall be due 90 calendar days after the grant year; quarterly or semi-annual reports shall be

due 30 days after the reporting period. (Frequency of these reports will be determined by the Grants Officer and Program Officer). The complete report and supporting documentation must be uploaded by the Recipient as a *Grant Note* under the corresponding record for this Agreement in GrantSolutions.gov. For assistance, please contact the GrantSolutions Help Desk at 1 (866) 577-0771 (toll free for US callers) or by email at help@grantsolutions.gov. The Federal Financial Report (FFR SF-425/SF-425a) must be submitted through the Payment Management System (PMS). The electronic version of the FFR can be accessed at: <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Once a financial report has been approved by the Department, the Recipient must upload the approved report to [GrantSolutions.gov](http://www.dpm.psc.gov/), in the same manner specified for the programmatic reports. Failure to comply with these reporting requirements may jeopardize the Recipient's eligibility for future Agreements.

- 2.) A final program and financial report no more than 90 days after the expiration or termination of the award;
- 3.) A concise, one-page final program report summarizing program outcomes no more than 90 days after the expiration of the award. This report should be e-mailed to: FFATAECA@state.gov. This one-page report will be transmitted to OMB, and be made available to the public via OMB's USAspending.gov website - as part of ECA's Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) reporting requirements.

Award recipients will be required to provide reports analyzing their evaluation findings to the Bureau in their regular program reports. (Please refer to D.3j. Program Monitoring and Evaluation information.)

All data collected, including survey responses and contact information, must be maintained for a minimum of three years and provided to the Bureau upon request.

G. Agency Contacts

For questions about this announcement, contact: Melissa Fernandez, Office of English Language Programs, ECA/A/L, U.S. Department of State, SA-5, 2200 C Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20037, telephone (202) 632-9276, accessprogram@state.gov.

All correspondence with the Bureau concerning this NOFO should reference the title and funding opportunity number listed at the top of this solicitation.

Please read the complete announcement before sending inquiries or submitting proposals. Once the NOFO deadline has passed, Bureau staff may not discuss this competition with applicants until the proposal review process has been completed.

H. Other Information:**Notice:**

The terms and conditions published in this NOFO are binding and may not be modified by any Bureau representative. Explanatory information provided by the Bureau that contradicts published language will not be binding. Issuance of the NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government. The Bureau reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with the needs of the program and the availability of funds. Awards made will be subject to periodic reporting and evaluation requirements per section F3. Reporting Requirements above.

Jennifer Zimdahl Galt
Acting Assistant Secretary for Educational and Cultural Affairs
U.S. Department of State

January 12, 2018